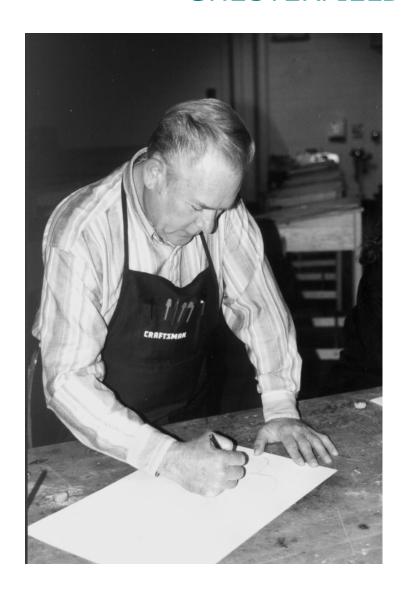


CHESTERFIELD COUNTY COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE

THE AGING OF THE POPULATION IN CHESTERFIELD COUNTY



Choices, Options, and Benefits Of Aging

January 2003

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Chesterfield County Public Schools, Chesterfield County Planning Department, Chesterfield County Health Department, Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation, Chesterfield County Libraries, Chesterfield County Department of Public Affairs

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January 8, 2003

The Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors Chesterfield County Chesterfield, Virginia 23832

Dear Members of the Board:

I present to the Board of Supervisors the report of the Committee on the Future. The report deals with the growing population of senior citizens in the County, and is entitled <u>The Aging of the Population in Chesterfield County: Choices, Options, and Benefits of Aging.</u>

Chesterfield's senior population is growing at a record rate, and will continue to grow rapidly until at least 2030. This report presents suggestions of how the county can prepare for the boom in older citizens. The focus of the report is on how to harness the abilities of seniors for the good of all of Chesterfield.

On behalf of the entire Committee, thank you for the opportunity to serve the County.

Sincerely,

John A. Gibney, Jr.

John A. Gibney, Jr.

Chairman

Committee on the Future

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many County officials, organizations, institutions, agencies, and individuals assisted the Committee on the Future during this study. The Committee thanks those whom it interviewed, those who provided data and those who attended the Committee's many focus groups and public meetings. Because of their contributions, this report reflects the concerns, opinions and observations of Chesterfield County.

The Committee also thanks the Department of Public Affairs, which helped in document preparation, and the Planning Department and County demographer Bill Handley, who helped with charts, graphs, and tables.

Finally, Kimberly Conley and Mary Kruse, government affairs coordinator and analyst, provided special assistance to the Committee. Mary and the Committee's vice-chairman, Ed DeGennaro, undertook the difficult job of reducing the Committee's views and findings — made over two years — to a draft of the report. Without the work of Kim, Mary, and Ed, the Committee could not have produced this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report, the Committee on the Future urges Chesterfield County to recognize the opportunities created by the growing population of senior citizens. Seniors are the fastest growing age group in the County. By the year 2030, the number of people over 65 years old will equal the number of those under the age of 20. The County's seniors want to remain a vital component of a healthy community. They want to live active, independent lives as long as possible. County government, as well as the private sector, needs to capitalize on seniors as an asset.

At the same time, the Committee suggests that the County acknowledge the collective community obligation to meet seniors' needs. County government, the business sector, churches, and nonprofit organizations must work together to make the County a place where seniors thrive.

The Committee's recommendations fall into three major categories: information, independence, and involvement.

INFORMATION Perhaps the major recommendation of the report is that County government establish a leadership position of Senior Advocate. In Chesterfield County, government and the community offer a wide variety of resources for seniors, but information about programs and opportunities is not well disseminated, and the services provided are poorly coordinated. One function of the Senior Advocate's office would be to identify all sources of services to seniors and to help the service providers coordinate their efforts. The Senior Advocate should hold a periodic roundtable of people and representatives of institutions that have an interest in seniors, so that those entities can share information and identify problems.

The Senior Advocate's office also should serve as a one-stop source for citizens who want information relevant to seniors. The office should be able to answer questions about senior services and opportunities on the telephone, and should maintain a user-friendly Website with the same information.

The County should promote education as a lifelong activity. Seniors want to continue learning for a variety of reasons, ranging from simple enjoyment to the acquisition of job skills. In particular, educational efforts should focus on information of particular use to seniors, including topics such as drug interaction, financial planning, and fraud prevention.

INDEPENDENCE Seniors want to remain in their chosen communities as long as possible. To meet their needs, the County should make it easier to modify homes to accommodate parents and older relatives who want to live with their children. The County also should identify the best housing features that enable seniors to remain in their homes, and encourage developers to incorporate them into their projects. In addition, the County should factor the needs of seniors into its zoning decisions.

In the area of health, the County should maintain its HealthTrak program and make it a model for businesses in Chesterfield. The Parks and Recreation Department should expand its offering of exercise programs designed especially for older people. The County and its developers should include walking

trails in developments, and should strongly emphasize the need for sidewalks throughout the County's communities.

The caregivers of older citizens deserve more attention. Most of them are family members, and often find themselves caring for the elderly without preparation or relief. The County should ease restrictions on adult day care centers and other forms of respite. It should encourage hospitals, schools, and community centers to provide training for caregivers who suddenly must care for someone who has health problems and whose conditions may require the caregiver to sort through the complicated processes of Medicare, Medicaid, and private health insurance.

The County also should take steps to help seniors to remain as mobile as possible. Some of the Committee's suggestions in this area can be done simply. For example, the Committee recommends that the County require all buildings to exhibit address numbers in large, visible letters. The County should consider the needs of seniors in all public transportation decisions. The Senior Advocate should set up a volunteer transportation network, which would coordinate the efforts of Chesterfield's many volunteers who may be willing to drive older people on local trips.

INVOLVEMENT Seniors prefer to remain active in the community in familiar ways. The Senior Advocate should maintain a listing of employment opportunities of interest to seniors. The Chesterfield County Public Schools should utilize seniors as substitute teachers, teachers' assistants, and volunteers. In fact, volunteering is a major activity of seniors. It provides an opportunity to make valuable contributions and a chance to socialize with others. The Senior Advocate should maintain a comprehensive list of all the volunteering opportunities available in the county.

This list of activities available to seniors should place emphasis on intergenerational opportunities—chances for seniors to work and interact with younger people. These provide advantages to seniors and to the rest of the community. For instance, mentoring programs can be invaluable to a younger person and personally fulfilling to the mentor.

The County also should encourage the development of community centers, where seniors can meet for programs, classes, and recreation. While the County may not create these centers itself, it should facilitate the process for other agencies and charities to do so.

* * *

It would be naïve to ignore the health problems that arise in old age. It is beyond the scope of this report to address health care for seniors and its funding. The Committee does recommend, however, that the County encourage public and private educational institutions to provide and promote training for nurses, assistants, and other healthcare providers. The County also should encourage hospitals to provide medical professionals with continued training on the latest techniques in dealing with geriatric issues.

PREFACE

ORIGINS AND MISSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE

he 1987 Chesterfield County Charter created the Committee on the Future. A permanent County body, the Committee consists of 10 members, two from each of the County's five magisterial districts. The Board of Supervisors appoints the members. The Charter directs the Committee to identify long-term challenges facing Chesterfield, and to suggest strategies and solutions for the future — as much as 30 years away. To fulfill its duties, the Committee develops reports on selected topics. Past reports have focused on economic development, neighborhood preservation, and youth development.

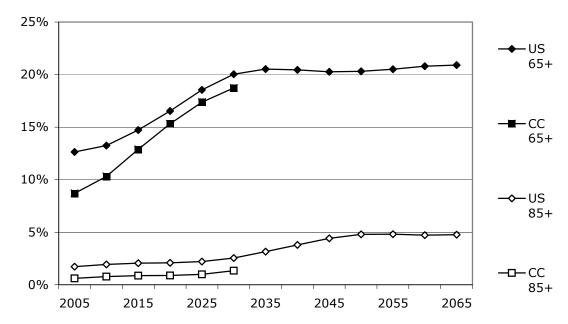
In all of its reports, the Committee begins its work by identifying potential topics and narrowing the field. The Committee analyzes the social environment of the County, surveys County government departments, and talks with experts from both the public and private sectors about issues facing Chesterfield. After months of winnowing, the Committee selects a topic of particular long-range significance to the County.

The Committee then conducts extensive research on the selected topic. It reviews historical patterns and current County strategies, and considers future trends. It meets with laymen and with professionals in the chosen field. The Committee also reviews and studies written work on the topic.

Eventually, the Committee drafts preliminary findings and recommendations. It presents its preliminary work to County departments, to County residents (through constituency meetings in each of the magisterial districts), and to various business, church, service, and volunteer groups. The input from these presentations helps the Committee to refine its recommendations and to develop a report for the Board of Supervisors.

The 1987 Chesterfield County Charter directs the Committee on the Future to identify longterm challenges facing the County, and to suggest strategies and solutions for the future.

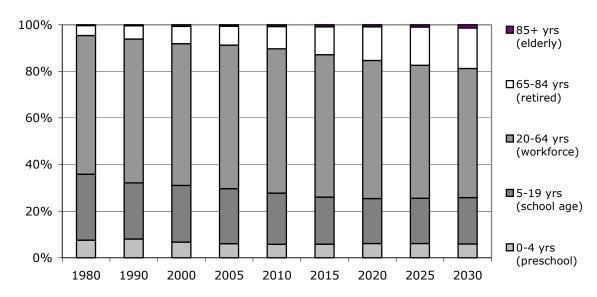
Figure 1 PERCENTAGE OF THE U.S. AND CHESTERFIELD COUNTY POPULATION 65 YRS+ AND 85 YRS+ (PROJECTED)



A DEFINING SOCIAL CHANGE. By 2030, the percent of the U.S. population 65 years and older will reach and level off at around 20 percent. By 2050, it is projected the percent of the U.S. population 85 years and older will reach and level off at around 5 percent.

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Figure 2 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF CHESTERFIELD COUNTY POPULATION



AN UNPRECEDENTED TRANSFORMATION. While the percentage of Chesterfield County's population of work force age remains almost steady, there is significant growth in the retired and elderly age groups.

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

VISION

A VISION OF CHESTERFIELD COUNTY'S FUTURE

Our vision for Chesterfield County recognizes the value of older citizens, offers them opportunities to serve the community, and understands that meeting their needs is a shared responsibility of all citizens.

ur nation and our County face a defining social change: the aging of America.¹ The growth of the older population has begun to reshape our families, workplaces, institutions, and even our attitudes. The dramatic change in America's population stems from the aging of the baby boom generation — people born from 1946 through 1964.

Population data² show the significance of the trend. In the mid-1930s, when Social Security was introduced, only 5 percent of the U.S. population was more than 65 years old; by 2030, this age group will level off at around 20 percent. Half the Americans who *ever* reached 65 years of age are currently alive.

Chesterfield County's population mirrors the national trend. (Figure 1) The baby boom generation now comprises over one-third of the County's population.³ It is projected that by 2030, 19 percent of Chesterfield County's residents — more than 80,000 people — will be over age 65.

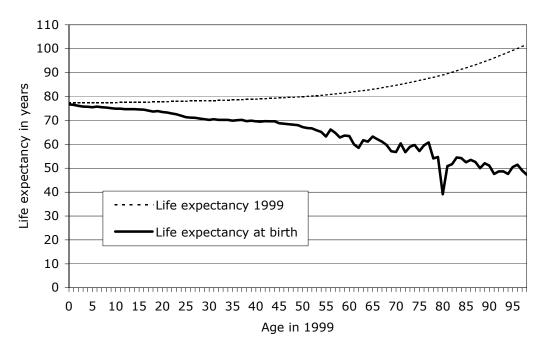
At the same time, youths, as a percentage of the total population, will decrease. Chesterfield County faces an unprecedented prospect: by 2030, the group of people over 65 years of age will be almost as large as the group under the age of 20. (Figure 2)

Projections for the 2030 census predict that over 20 percent of the U.S. population will be in the 65+ age group. Two major factors have contributed: rising life expectancy and declining birthrate.

The baby boom generation now comprises 34.6 percent of the County's population.

Figure 3 LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH VS. LIFE EXPECTANCY IN 1999

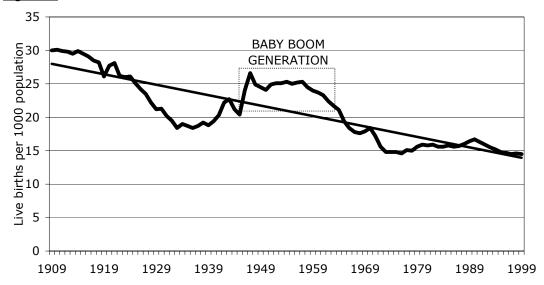
FOR U.S. POPULATION BORN 1900-1999



RISING LIFE EXPECTANCY. Persons born in 1900 were expected to live 47 years, but if they were still alive in 1999 they looked forward to another three years. Boomers born in 1949 were expected to live 68 years, but if they lived to celebrate their 50th birthday they looked forward to another 30 years.

SOURCE: NATIONAL VITAL STATISTICS REPORT, VOLUME 50, No. 6

Figure 4 U.S. Population BIRTHRATE FROM 1909 to 1999



DECLINING BIRTHRATE. Although the birthrate in the United States over the last century has shown a downward trend, the marked rise in births from 1946-1964 is a major factor in the aging of America.

SOURCE: University of California-Berkeley Mortality Tables

Some facts about U.S. seniors:

- Only 5 percent of seniors live in nursing homes.
- Disability among seniors dropped 15 percent between 1982 and 1994.
- Retirement frees 25 hours per week for men, 18 hours per week for women.
- ◆ In 1948, 90 percent of men aged 55-64 were employed. Today, only 67 percent in that age range are working.
- Overall, only one in five Americans over age 55 holds a regular job.
- ◆ The baby boomer generation is, overall, the best-educated generation in this country's history.

Two major factors have contributed to this trend: rising life expectancy and declining birthrate. Life expectancy for a person born in 1900 was less than 48 years. Fifty years later, those born in the boomer generation could expect to live seven decades, and, with good health, will routinely live well into their 90s. (Figure 3) Already the fastest-growing age segment is 85 years old and older.

At the same time, birthrates have significantly declined since the late 1950s. (Figure 4) While the population has been living longer, they also have been bearing fewer children. This unprecedented phenomenon is reshaping our families, attitudes, work lives and institutions. The most defining social change taking place in our country is the aging of America.⁵

The "greying" of our population presents unique opportunities. One expert calls senior citizens "our only increasing natural resource." They have experience, education, free time, and a desire to contribute to society. Seniors as a group show more motivation to remain active than any other generation. Thus, they represent an invaluable resource that can help solve many social and business problems.

Of course, the Committee also recognizes that seniors require services other generations do not demand. The senior population is a diverse group; one-size-fits-all answers do not address their needs. Government alone cannot meet the special needs of our older citizens. Nor can their families, who most often serve as primary caregivers. The County as a whole shares the responsibility of meeting

Senior citizens could be the most significant resource this County has ever had.

Seniors are a diverse group; one-size-fits-all answers do not address their needs.

the needs of aging citizens and their families — government, business, industry, the faith community, nonprofit agencies and private citizens all have a part to play. Only a highly collaborative effort by the whole community will meet the needs of our senior population.

While seniors will always have unique needs and pose special challenges, they represent a resource the county can harness to its great benefit. This report will outline ways in which Chesterfield County can take advantage of that resource. The primary issue facing all members of government and the community surrounding the aging population is *awareness* — not just awareness of opportunities and challenges of older citizens, but also of their value to the population. All segments of the community, including county government, should take this view.

Society will enjoy the benefits of "our only increasing natural resource." The County and the nation must adopt a new mindset that views seniors as assets who are capable and contributing members of society. Ultimately, we need to recognize that seniors are a vital component of a healthy, diverse and growing economy and community.

¹ Kashi, Ed and Winokur, Julie. "Aging in America". MSNBC. Picture Stories. June 29, 2001. 31 March 2002.

² U.S. Census Bureau. Census 1900-2000

³ U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000

⁴ National Vital Statistics Report. Volume 48. Number 18. February 7,2001.

⁵ Kashi, Ed and Winokur, Julie. "Aging in America." MSNBC Picture Stories. 29 June 2001. 31 March 2002.

http://www.msnbc.com/modules/ps/010524 aginginamerica/splash.asp>

MISSION

The mission of this report is to enhance the lives of all Chesterfield County citizens. We offer suggestions that address the needs and opportunities of senior citizens in the areas of health, information services, mobility, education, social and leisure time, finances and housing.

ur suggestions involve education, advocacy, and service to and from our seniors. We seek to extend the years our older citizens maintain independence and remain active, engaged community members.

Only seniors who are *aware* of the programs and services in the community can use them. The Committee has found that many resources are available to seniors, but information about the resources is either not disseminated or not disseminated in a usable form. Seniors want to maintain their independence, not burden their families, friends, or communities. Knowing what services are available, and how to use them, will allow senior citizens to remain active longer. When seniors remain active, they will enrich the fabric of the community as a whole.

The body of our report has three main sections dealing with INFORMATION, INDEPENDENCE, and INVOLVEMENT. We present recommendations that, if met, will go a long way toward meeting the needs of seniors while encouraging them to continue contributing to the County. One of Chesterfield County's strategic goals is to be acknowledged for its extraordinary quality of life. Although in the strictest sense the Committee's recommendations deal with senior citizens, they aim to enhance a sense of community—a place where all belong and shoulder a responsibility to make Chesterfield County a better place to live.

The Committee believes that informed citizens will remain independent and involved for a longer part of their lives.







INFORMATION

Ithough we live in an era of unparalleled communication, one of the greatest needs of senior citizens is to be *informed*. Seniors in Chesterfield County have the opportunity to take advantage of a wide array of programs and services available to them. Unfortunately, information about these services and programs is neither well-known nor readily accessible to citizens. Our community has a wealth of resources, but lacks adequate coordination and easy points of entry for seniors.

County government offers a great deal of senior support. The Chesterfield County Public Library is actively engaged in providing information on many topics to seniors in the community. The departments of Social Services, Parks and Recreation, Health, Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Substance Abuse, and the Cooperative Extension Office all have programs specially designed for seniors. Fire and Emergency Medical Services, the Police Department, and the Sheriff's Office provide various classes for seniors, and employees of those agencies visit and monitor older residents in the community. County schools offer an extensive adult education program, and provide many volunteering opportunities suited to seniors. In addition, tax-relief programs are available for low-income elderly people, and grant-funded community centers exist in some parts of the County.

Nonprofit organizations, including Senior Connections and the Long Term Care Council, offer information about an expanding range of senior services. The faith community continues to provide strong support networks open to all people regardless of faith. Private businesses supply home health care, assisted-living residences, managed care, transportation, residential maintenance, senior discounts, and many leisure activities.

Yet, with all these choices of services, Chesterfield County lacks an adequate system linking providers to those in need and to each other. Those who manage

Coordination and clear points of entry will make Chesterfield's many resources more valuable to seniors.

The Committee found that many providers are unaware of the existence of others offering similar services in the same areas. complementary programs and services often have no knowledge of the others' existence. Many resources fail to reach their potential because of lack of information about the areas of need.

Chesterfield County may strengthen its information network for seniors in two ways. First, all providers of programs and services must become aware of each other so they can interact in a complementary fashion. Second, seniors and their families need a central location for access to this information. This section of the report contains recommendations to reach these two goals.

SENIOR ADVOCATE

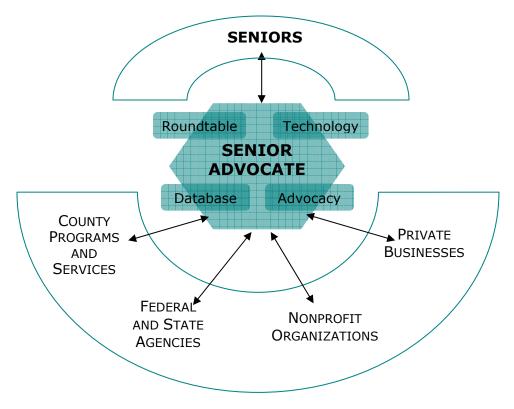
he Committee recommends that a properly qualified person be designated as an advocate for senior citizens. This individual should be responsible for developing, coordinating and disseminating information to seniors, and acting as the spokesperson and advocate for seniors, inside and outside County government.

The creation of this position forms a core element of the Committee's strategy in this report. Given the growing size of the senior population, the advocate should be a fulltime employee, and will likely need administrative support.

While one of the advocate's roles will involve coordination of information and services, the job of senior-citizen advocate should be a leadership position. The Senior Advocate should have the authority to make decisions and initiate action, not merely to coordinate or report. Without enough authority, a person in this position would likely remain ineffective.

The Senior Advocate should have a variety of responsibilities: collecting data; developing and distributing information; acting as a spokesperson, advocate and leader for seniors; coordinating services; and interacting directly with seniors, their caregivers and their service providers. Since a major part of the job will consist of coordinating services and information provided by community partners, the advocate should hold regularly scheduled roundtable meetings. The advocate should invite to the meetings service providers in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The roundtable meetings would provide venues to exchange information and ideas, to combine and strengthen

RECOMMENDATION 1
Chesterfield County
should establish a
leadership position within
county government to
promote senior services.



SENIOR ADVOCATE. The Senior Advocate should have a variety of responsibilities: collecting data; developing and distributing information; acting as a senior spokesperson, advocate and leader; coordinating services; and interacting directly with seniors, their caregivers and their service providers.

STRATEGY 1:1
Plan a regularly
scheduled roundtable
for people working
with seniors.

existing programs and services, and to establish needed new ones.

The roundtable would also strengthen the County government's relationships with community businesses, agencies, and organizations. The County government would serve as a leader in providing services for seniors. At the same time, it could expand the available services through external partners with minimal expense to the county.

The roundtable would provide opportunities to collect and share data. The information could become a basis not only to determine the effectiveness of current programs and services, but also to discover the need to collaborate in, or initiate, new ones. A comprehensive database should eventually show that needs were met and no resources were wasted. The database could hold information about County seniors, and enable the County to send notice of particular resources to seniors with specific needs.

In addition, the people who attend the roundtable could also serve as an informal advisory committee to the Senior Advocate. They would help the advocate keep a finger on the pulse of the senior-services community and keep abreast of changing issues.

In addition to the roundtable, the Senior Advocate should use the most powerful tools available to disseminate information. The Senior Advocate's office should serve as a "one-stop shop" for seniors — the single place a senior could go for information on any issue of importance to older citizens.

At a minimum, the advocate's office should provide comprehensive assistance by telephone. The growing number of seniors' concerns will warrant a senior citizen help line. The advocate's office should refer people to resources such as fraud protection, medical information, and educational programs. The local cable television channel currently broadcasting County government news could serve as an effective tool to publicize information and services for seniors. The advocate's office would not provide these services, but would refer seniors and their families to the precise assistance they need.

While many seniors do not currently use the Internet, in relatively short order most seniors will have strong computer skills. The Senior Advocate should maintain a Web site to perform the same functions as the help line—to direct the user to sources of information and to services. The site should be both comprehensive in scope and easy to use. It should include an interactive page of senior services with links to departments and agencies offering programs. The County's interface with seniors should be senior-friendly in terms of accessibility, usage, and response. The County Web site needs a senior-services access point on the home page. It would be available to local seniors and to their families who may live far away and need information to provide caregiver support. An example of a notable Web site for seniors is SeniorNavigator.com, a user-friendly Web site that specializes in information and services needed by seniors throughout Virginia. Chesterfield Web site should focus on local information and services relating to Chesterfield and the greater Richmond Area, with links to other sites.

STRATEGY 1:2 Create a one-stop shop for information about issues important to seniors, their families, and their caregivers.

STRATEGY 1:3
Provide information about resources through the Internet and future technologies.

STRATEGY 1:4 Connect our seniors with public agencies and private clearinghouses to protect them from fraud and abuse. The rapid growth of the Internet shows that new communications technology will continuously evolve. Undoubtedly, something as yet unimagined will eventually complement, and perhaps replace, the telephone and the Internet. Whatever the next innovation, the advocate's office should use it as soon as it becomes effective.

Since the advocate would collect a wealth of data about seniors, he or she would be in a unique position to communicate with federal and state agencies on behalf of the senior population in Chesterfield County. One form of advocacy is liaison between regulatory agencies, such as the Office of Consumer Affairs and the State Board of Contractors, to reduce scams that victimize seniors. Other forms of advocacy might include providing information about seniors' needs to legislative panels, urging the creation of regional services for seniors, and helping to guide long-term regional growth.

LEARNING AS A LIFELONG ACTIVITY

hesterfield County should continue to make lifelong learning a priority. In the past, learning occurred in early life, followed by working and raising a family. People had only a short time for retirement.

In contrast, tomorrow's citizens will enjoy longer lives with two senior phases — a transition out of full-time employment and a more traditional retirement. Seniors will live 30 percent to 40 percent of their lives with free time for work, learning, and fun. Leisure planning will become an important component of aging. In the transition phase from full-time employment, they may leave a full-time career to pursue second careers, part-time jobs, or other work activities that provide increased gratification or reward. Some will find time for education, leisure activity and volunteerism.

In full retirement, similar opportunities arise. Retired seniors will have longer spans of good health and the desire to fill those times with meaningful activities. These may involve volunteer work, church-related projects, and cultural and recreational activities.

A common theme through these phases is the need for continual learning. Life will require practical training for work and survival, and should include learning simply for

RECOMMENDATION 2
Chesterfield County
should continue to
make lifelong learning
a priority.

the joy of it. A variety of educational programs fall into this latter category, from dance lessons to the study of art history. In practical areas, seniors will need opportunities such as short courses in new job skills, financial planning, investment, computer use, health-care techniques, and other topics.

Chesterfield should expand both educational and recreational opportunities for older citizens, especially during daylight hours. This learning can be done in formal college and school programs, through the extension service, or with private instructors.

Again, coordination of programs and dissemination of information about them is just as important as offering the programs. Our County and region already offer many educational opportunities for seniors, but the County lacks a central registry from which seniors can pick their programs. The Senior Advocate should maintain such a registry.

A registry of current educational programs would include the Chesterfield County Adult Education Program of classes, including the Senior Passport Program for residents 60 years old or older. Virginia Cooperative Extension provides programs, workshops, and volunteer opportunities. Chesterfield County libraries hold community-based classes at all their locations and future outreach plans include deposit collections at senior centers and care centers as well as a homebound delivery service. The Parks and Recreation Department publishes a semiannual listing of adult-education opportunities, including some senior-specific programs. The Chesterfield Historical Society offers a variety of classes. These programs should be enhanced, expanded, and publicized.

In addition to government programs, community colleges and universities in the area have accessible college-credit and continuing-education classes. Hospitals, senior centers, cultural facilities and environmental agencies provide a wide range of information to County residents.

In sum, the Committee recommends expanding adult educational and recreational opportunities, maintaining a central registry of educational and recreational opportunities for seniors, and increasing the number of daytime classes.

Lifelong learning experiences that likely hold the most appeal for mature adults have subject matter that is personally meaningful, are taught in interactive learning STRATEGY 2:1
Expand educational and recreational opportunities for seniors.

environments, allow student control over all aspects of the learning process, and are not too expensive.

Three particular kinds of classes are of great interest to seniors: health courses, financial education, and courses to avoid fraud. The County should devote special attention to ensuring that seniors receive quality education in these areas.

Programs about health issues should include teaching of proper nutrition for older adults, drug interaction, and the importance of keeping fit in later life. Family caregivers to older adults will benefit from workshops, coordinated with local hospitals, on caregiving for laymen.

To help seniors remain financially independent, classes relating to money management offered through Chesterfield County Adult Education and Virginia Cooperative Extension should continue. Additional offerings should deal with the special needs of those living on fixed-income budgets, of those dealing with Medicare and Medicaid, and of those evaluating insurance programs, including long-term care and life insurance.

Since vulnerability increases with age, seniors voice major concern over personal, financial, and property safety. The Police Department Citizens' Academy currently offers a 10-week course to increase awareness of the roles of citizens and police in ensuring the safety and security of the community. In addition, Chesterfield TRIAD, through its governing body, Seniors and Law Enforcement Together, strives to educate seniors about programs, services, and Community support, techniques for crime prevention. strengthened through the Neighborhood Watch Program, should be encouraged in all areas of the County. Fire and EMS, through grants funding, has developed an educational video about fire safety for presentation to senior groups. Volunteers should be trained to present this and similar material throughout the County. Information about these opportunities should be disseminated more widely, the courses should be offered in all areas of the County, and the Senior Advocate should maintain a registry that includes a section on personal and financial protection.

An informed senior population will possess the tools to safely live, work and enjoy their community. Information is the key to a long, independent, and involved life.

STRATEGY 2:2 Ensure the availability of classes on health and financial issues.

Strategy 2:3 Offer preventive measures against fraud.









INDEPENDENCE

y "independence," older Americans mean not having to rely on others to handle their own daily needs. They want to "age in place," in a setting with the amenities they need, in a location near where they have spent their lives. Their independence also requires health and wellness to enjoy life, personal mobility, and adequate financial resources. Finally, and ironically, independence can also require access to needed assistance.

The entire community must work together to satisfy seniors' desire for independence. With supportive and coordinated assistance available, seniors can live where they choose as long as they are physically and mentally able.

Housing

he Committee on the Future recommends that we — County's government and its citizens — assist older persons to live independently in their homes in the communities of their choice.

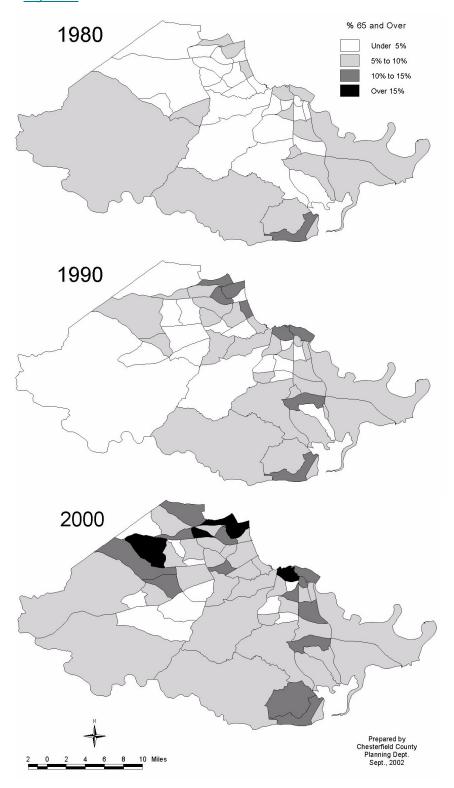
Surveys¹ show that nearly all seniors want to remain in their current residences as long as possible. They like to stay near a familiar community, neighborhood, friends, and family. Sometimes, of course, retirement, the death of one's spouse, or a need for care provide reasons to consider moving. Even then, however, most seniors want to move within the same area, and remain a part of the community where they raised children, made friends, joined churches, and made personal contributions.

Aging in place may require new homes in established areas, renovation of existing homes, or installation of devices to assist seniors. Most older people live in houses that are more than 20 years old, and often in need of repair. Residents living on fixed incomes may need

RECOMMENDATION 3
We — the citizens and
County government —
should assist older
people to live
independently in their
homes, in the
communities of their
choice.

Strategy 3:1
Increase awareness of support programs that assist people who choose to "age in place."

Figure 5 Percent of the County Population 65 years and older



WHERE SENIORS LIVE. The 2000 Census showed five census tracts in Chesterfield County with over 15 percent of the population aged 65 years or older.

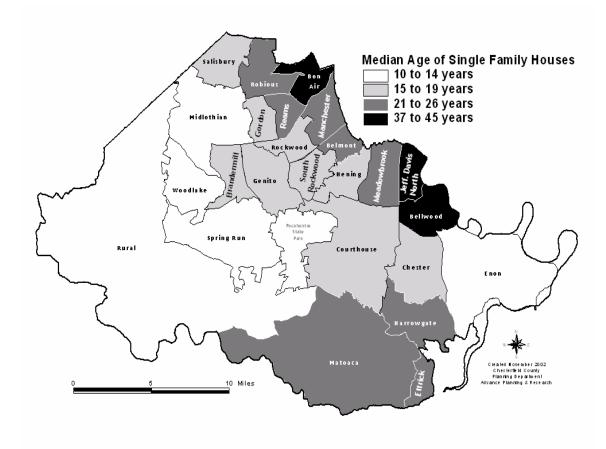


Figure 6 MEDIAN AGE OF SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING IN CHESTERFIELD COUNTY

MANY SENIORS LIVE IN OLDER HOMES. Older neighborhoods have a high percentage of senior citizens because most older adults prefer to "age in place." (The distribution on this map is based on "natural breaks." or clustering of similarly aged housing.)

STRATEGY 3:2
Revisit, revise, and promote incentive programs regarding housing for seniors.

financial assistance to make necessary repairs. The 1995 Committee on the Future report on Neighborhood Preservation recommended a residential tax-incentive program for rehabilitation, renovation, or replacement of residential structures that are at least 25 years old.² In the last eight years, only 28 County homeowners filed forms to receive real estate-tax deferments as part of the Residential Rehabilitation Program. The current process is simply too cumbersome. This incentive program needs to be revisited, revised as necessary, and promoted.

Other home-modification programs make loans or provide services free of charge to qualifying older people. Elder Homes, a nonprofit organization, offers assistance to install indoor plumbing and make emergency home repairs through funding from the Community Development Block Grant office. Federal programs for Weatherization Assistance and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance are also available. As with the tax-incentive program discussed above, the Committee recommends increasing awareness of residential rehabilitation programs and studying the application process to make it simpler and more seniorfriendly.

Further, all seniors, including those who do not need financial assistance, should receive encouragement to provide maintenance and improvement of their homes. A building code education program for elderly homeowners can help promote this sort of preventive maintenance. It can also trigger enforcement, which stops the deterioration of neighborhoods.

Family caregivers often choose to modify their own residences to include separate housing for senior parents or These in-law suites allow seniors to receive support, while living independently in their own private areas. Typically, the in-law suites have separate entrances and places for sleeping, eating, cooking and bathing. Chesterfield County's zoning ordinances require a conditional-use permit for in-law suites. Conditional-use permits protect a single-family community from changing its character to one of multi-family residences. conditional-use permit is a flexible tool that may contain many conditions, including an expiration date. The process to obtain a permit, however, is difficult and costly. The Committee has two recommendations. First, the County should streamline the process to obtain approval to modify a residence for the care of a senior relative. Second, the County should make the process more affordable.

Elder Cottage Housing Opportunities (ECHO) offer another option for independent senior housing near family members. ECHO homes are small, self-contained, portable housing units that can be attached to or located near a single-family home. Like in-law suites, ECHO units permit closeness without sacrificing self-reliance and often foster a spirit of mutual support between households. ECHO units, however, have an additional advantage — they are not permanent housing. Most people lease them, and the leasing company later removes and reuses them. Chesterfield

<u>STRATEGY 3:3</u> Explore new zoning ordinances regulating innovative options. STRATEGY 3:4
Study housing for seniors to advise developers and homeowners of best practices.

Strategy 3:5 Continue and encourage the development of villages. County does not now permit this temporary option. The Committee recommends that the County consider the feasibility of allowing ECHO units.

Simple design principles may lengthen the time residents can live independently in their own homes. Plans for construction in Chesterfield County should identify senior-friendly housing features, including safety items and proximity and accessibility to nearby service centers. The Committee recommends that the County benchmark the senior-housing market and advise County developers of best practices.

In a broader sense, Chesterfield County should consider the needs of seniors in its overall planning. The County developed as a suburban single-family residential community with schools, parks, libraries, and malls to meet the needs of the growing families that were moving here. While seniors can enjoy many of these same services, older citizens do have different needs.

Chesterfield's Comprehensive Plan³ helps the County manage growth and development. The County revisits the plan regularly to ensure that citizens, businesses, property owners, and local government officials can anticipate changes and plan constructively for our future. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that neighborhoods form the building blocks of the County. The Plan recognizes the village concept of residences, services, and retail shops compactly located and surrounded by a natural area. This concept is ideal for senior housing and accessibility to services. The County should continue to encourage the development of villages.

By the same token, the County should consider the needs of seniors when addressing requests to build in developed areas. Older communities, such as Bon Air, Meadowbrook, Chester, and Ettrick, have limited space to build facilities to help seniors age in place. Yet these same communities typically have high concentrations of older residents. New development and replacement housing, including the possibility of village-like settings, in those areas can help seniors to stay in their old neighborhoods.

Many fixed-income seniors benefit from The Real Estate Tax Relief for the Elderly or Disabled Program. In Chesterfield, over 2,000 forms for participation in this

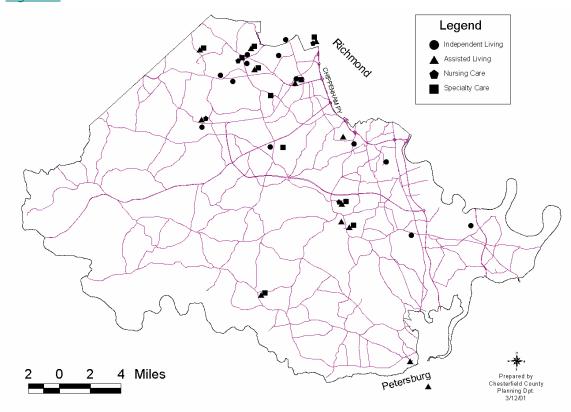


Figure 7 Location of Chesterfield County Senior Housing

CONSIDERING THE NEEDS OF SENIORS. New development and replacement housing, including the possibility of village-like settings, in older communities can help seniors to stay in their old neighborhoods.

program have been processed in each of the last five years. To continue this success, the Committee recommends increasing awareness of the program and streamlining the application process.

The County also needs to promote retirement housing for seniors of moderate income. Currently, the County has a number of options in the upper and lower price levels, but little retirement housing suitable for seniors of middle incomes. In judging zoning applications, the County should ensure that developers provide a full range of senior housing.

Finally, the County should guide the placement of facilities that provide long-term care to seniors. Nursing homes and assisted-living facilities do exist in the County, but they are concentrated in relatively few areas. Moreover, the County has only one continuing care retirement community, Brandermill

STRATEGY 3:6
Ensure the availability of a full range of housing options for seniors.

Woods. This type of facility offers guaranteed housing from independent homes to full-assistance facilities.

Proper planning of senior housing will help the County meet the future needs of its entire population. The Committee recommends that the County define and initiate activities to ensure an appropriate variety of housing options for the growing senior population.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

ood health allows seniors to remain independent. While heredity and past lifestyle affect health in later life, it is never too late to improve habits. Oftentimes it is the later years that afford one the time to pursue recreational activities. Leisure planning should include wellness training. The Committee recommends that the County motivate and educate residents to maintain good health in a variety of ways.

The County government can serve as a model for the community. The County's HealthTrak Program is a wellness and fitness program for employees. Chesterfield is one of the largest employers in the County, and its employees mirror the general population in physiological challenges and changes. HealthTrak offers a wealth of information, and a variety of programs throughout the year. An annual three-day health fair provides check-ups and health screenings with six-month follow-ups. HealthTrak provides aerobic exercise, walking programs, and nutrition monitoring. The Health Department offers flu shots and health screenings. The Public Safety Training Center provides the use of exercise facilities to all employees.

Another program, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), is a free, voluntary and confidential service designed to help employees and their family members resolve personal problems that may affect job performance. It provides assessments, consultations, and referrals to community resources when appropriate. EAP assists with depression, stress, substance abuse, financial problems, and offers resources for legal advice and elder care. The Committee recommends the continuation of HealthTrak and EAP for County employees.

RECOMMENDATION 4
Chesterfield County
should encourage
programs that assist
residents with
maintaining their own
wellness.

STRATEGY 4:1
Continue HealthTrak
and Employee
Assistance Programs
for county employees.

HealthTrak should serve as a model for private employers. While few employers can provide gyms or sponsor health fairs, all employers can make these activities available to their employees. The Chesterfield Parks and Recreation Department, for instance, will establish low-cost exercise classes on request. Hospitals and other facilities provide health fairs, counseling, and advice. The County can direct private employers to free or low-cost resources, which may compose a program such as HealthTrak. The Committee recommends that Chesterfield County assist and encourage other employers to provide wellness programs.

While HealthTrak and similar programs promote lifelong wellness, Chesterfield also needs to target services to seniors. The government currently offers a variety of services to maintain good health in seniors. The Department of Parks and Recreation offers wellness programs for seniors at Bensley and Ettrick Community Centers, as well as facilities in other areas of the county. The adult education program in Chesterfield County Public Schools has a variety of exercise and nutrition classes. Nutrition classes specifically for seniors can be requested from the Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Private organizations also offer useful wellness programs. The Shepherd's Center of Chesterfield, the YMCAs, the Senior Center of Richmond-Chesterfield, local hospitals, and private fitness centers offer programs for the older population. Unfortunately, many county residents must travel long distances to participate in group programs. The Committee recommends that Chesterfield County assist and encourage communities to establish wellness programs.

Not all wellness programs need to be government, or employer, sponsored. One of the best exercises for seniors is walking. It requires no special equipment beyond suitable shoes. In many areas of Chesterfield, however, busy, narrow roads are the only walking trails. In developing new areas, and redeveloping older communities, and in building our park system, the County should keep in mind the needs of pedestrians. Residents can walk safely on sidewalks or on adequately wide roadways within housing developments. County developments such as the "linear park" now planned for a former rail right-of-way in the Chester area will be a significant asset. The Committee recommends providing for

Strategy 4:2
Assist and encourage other employers to offer wellness programs.

Strategy 4:3
Assist and encourage communities to establish wellness programs.

Strategy 4:4
Provide for pedestrian
pathways to encourage
wellness.

pedestrian pathways in all areas of the County to encourage wellness.

By the same token, nutrition presents important challenges to seniors. Many seniors eat foods that pose especially serious dangers to the aged. Other older citizens simply eat too little. Education about the importance of a balanced diet in the senior years is vital to seniors. Hospitals, senior centers, and churches offer programs about nutrition, and the County's Senior Advocate should coordinate these programs so that they are publicized and available to the widest possible population.

<u>Strategy 4:5</u> Coordinate meal services so County seniors enjoy good nutrition. Education alone, however, will not do the trick. A substantial increase in the elderly population will increase demand for meal services. Many senior centers offer a nutritious noon meal and provide socialization at the same time. Meals-on-Wheels delivers nutritious meals to the homes of elderly shut-ins and provides group dining in the Friendship Cafes at the Ettrick and Bensley community centers. The Committee recommends that the Senior Advocate coordinate meal services so County seniors enjoy good nutrition.

CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE

as possible, aging inevitably brings a period of dependence on the care of others. The inability to care for oneself can come quickly, as through a fall, or may arrive gradually through conditions such as Alzheimer's disease or loss of vision. Either way, some seniors will need a caregiver. Most frequently, the caregiver is not a paid nurse or companion, but a volunteer from the family.

The task of providing care to an infirm family member can be daunting. Sixty percent of family caregivers reported spending 40 hours a week or more meeting the needs of an elderly family member. One study has shown that as many as three-fourths of spousal caregivers have no consistent help from other family members.⁵ The work is stressful. The once-independent person needing care may now feel helpless and depressed, angry and confused. At the same time, the caregiver may feel inadequate, angry and frustrated, yet guilty for having such feelings. Most

<u>RECOMMENDATION 5</u> Chesterfield County should foster caregiver assistance.

Current County Zoning Regulations FOR DAYCARE WITHIN PRIVATE HOMES

	Adult Care	Child Care	
1-5 individuals	CONDITIONAL USE	By right	
		WITH RESTRICTIONS	
6+ individuals	CONDITIONAL USE	CONDITIONAL USE	
Conditional Use FEE	\$1250	\$250	
	+ \$30 PER ACRE		

SOURCE: CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

caregivers need some time off and some help. Caregiver assistance should include information, services, training, and employer support.

Each caregiving situation can present conflicting needs. What care the recipient wants, needs, and will accept often differs dramatically from what the caregiver alone can provide. Our community offers a variety of services to assist caregivers.⁶ Providers of these services include the government, churches, nonprofit groups, and businesses. Finding the services, however, can be difficult, because no central registry of them exists. Another function of the Senior Advocate should be to create and maintain a registry of services that can assist caregivers.

Providing care to an infirm relative can be emotionally difficult. The most common ailment suffered by caregivers is depression. Respite time can improve, or at least preserve, the quality of caregivers' daily lives, which may improve the quality of the care they provide. It offers a chance to escape briefly the constant responsibility of providing care, and to regain some balance in the caregiver's personal life. Adult day care, either in-home or at a day-care center, is one source of relief. Current County zoning ordinances, however, discourage the growth of adult day care. In February 2002, the Chesterfield Planning Department proposed amendment of adult-care regulations to parallel childcare regulations. The Committee

<u>STRATEGY 5:1</u> Organize and coordinate respite providers to relieve caregivers.

<u>STRATEGY 5:2</u> Amend county ordinances to make adult day care readily available. STRATEGY 5:3
Provide training in direct care and personal advocacy for family caregivers.

<u>Strategy 5:4</u> Provide specialized assistance to elderly caregivers.

STRATEGY 5:5
Encourage employers
to develop familyfriendly initiatives that
allow workers to assist
older relatives.

recommends that the County consider zoning amendments to make adult day care readily available.

Because the majority of caregivers assume their roles unexpectedly, few have sufficient training to provide a full range of needed care and assistance. Most families are not aware of the many programs that provide information and instruction for caregivers. For instance, many hospitals offer classes about direct-care skills. The classes include diverse topics, such as where to find and how to use specialty equipment, how to deal with long-term physical limitations, and how to handle common problems such as vision and hearing loss, arthritis, and incontinence. addition to physical care, a relative often must become the personal advocate for the family member. This role requires knowledge of home safety and senior housing options, interaction with medical, financial, and insurance professionals or institutions, and sources for legal advice. This information is available from a variety of resources; the problem is finding the resource. The Committee recommends that the County encourage health-care organizations and providers of services to seniors to expand and increase the scope of training in direct-care and personal-advocacy skills for family caregivers.

Two types of family caregivers should be noted here—the increasing number of grandparents raising grandchildren and the old taking care of those even older. Grandparents may need guidance about their legal rights, as well as information concerning education. Seniors caring for elderly relatives require unique forms of support. The Committee recommends that older caregivers be given special assistance to maintain their own well-being while providing care for others.

Finally, caregivers need assistance in their own workplaces. Many caregivers have full-time employment along with the duty of caring for an infirm relative or friend. Some employers offer their employees assistance with their family duties through flexible scheduling, personal leave, and allowance for many common family demands and activities. Many employers, however, do not make such accommodations. County government should encourage and recognize employers that adopt "family-friendly" initiatives to help employees balance their responsibilities.

MOBILITY

he ability to freely move around the home and the community is a treasured part of senior life. It is linked closely to a sense of independence and, if lost, creates significant challenges for caregivers. The assurance of a safe community, with places where seniors gather and socialize, contributes to the well-being of an aging population. The mobility of older adults may require some changes within our community — changes that will benefit the populace as a whole.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

rehicle transportation is essential. Although the County does have some compactly developed areas, it lacks a central business district. Almost all County residents must travel by car to take care of routine chores. For those who drive, access to suburban facilities is relatively easy. But some seniors either can no longer drive or prefer not to drive at night. For them, our region offers few, if any, public transit alternatives. The Committee recommends the County explore transportation alternatives that are useful to seniors.

The Greater Richmond Transit Corporation (GRTC), a nonprofit government-owned corporation, provides limited service in the County to a limited clientele. GRTC runs fixed-route bus service to three limited areas along the northern edge of the County. Petersburg Area Transit serves the southeastern edge of the County, including Ettrick. GRTC also operates the Community Assisted Ride Enterprise, with specialized public transportation for seniors and the disabled. This program provides curb-to-curb service for limited categories of qualified people, with an abbreviated schedule, in a small northeastern area of the county. GRTC's Chesterfield LINK vans provide broader transit service along Midlothian Turnpike, Chippenham Parkway, Jefferson Davis Highway and Iron Bridge Road. Express transit vans offer non-stop service between Park and Ride lots at John Tyler Community College's Chester Campus or Chesterfield Plaza, and downtown Richmond. With advance reservation, and schedule permitting, the

RECOMMENDATION 6
Chesterfield County
should explore
transportation
alternatives useful to
seniors.

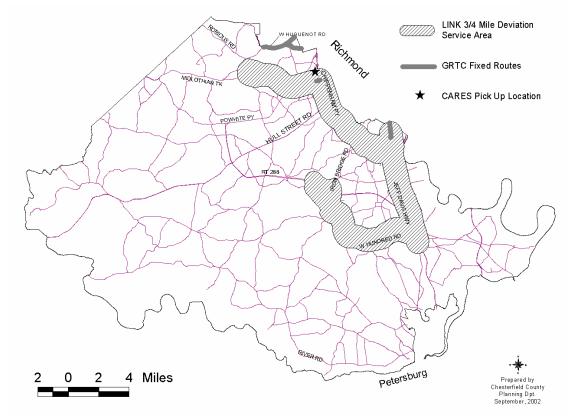


Figure 8 GRTC SERVICE IN CHESTERFIELD COUNTY

GRTC ROUTES. Public transportation provides limited service in Chesterfield County to a limited clientele.

LINK vans will pick up or drop off within three-fourths of a mile of the local route. Curb-to-curb LINK paratransit service is available with advance reservation for qualified people under the Americans with Disabilities Act in the LINK service area.

The only other public transit alternative in Chesterfield County is local taxi service offered by various cab companies in Richmond, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg. Taxi service is often too expensive and does not serve some rural areas of the County. Other communities offer car service. Car services provide point-to-point service just as taxis do, with the important difference that riders can negotiate fares. Car service does not currently exist in Chesterfield.

These forms of public transportation do not completely serve the current needs of Chesterfield's senior population, and will be grossly inadequate as the size of our

older population grows. While exploring transportation alternatives for seniors, the County should evaluate existing, as well as innovative, forms of transit.

One strategy could derive from experience with Chesterfield's LINK service. The current system, begun in June 2001, is a two-year pilot program funded by state and federal monies. Analysis of the pilot program, and variations that might be best suited to senior citizens' needs, should be included as part of a comprehensive examination of transportation alternatives for seniors. The County should assess the need for taxi and car service.

As a less expensive approach, the County could help implement a volunteer transportation network. networks, local government and human-service agencies combine efforts to organize individuals who are willing to provide free transportation in their community. The role of government would be limited to coordination, with the transportation provided by volunteers. Similar programs have succeeded in Clackamas County, Oregon, and Gloucester County, New Jersey.⁸ Like Chesterfield, these jurisdictions are part of larger metropolitan areas (Portland and Philadelphia, respectively) with growing needs for transportation for the elderly in sprawling suburban and rural areas. Volunteer transportation networks should succeed in Chesterfield, in part because the County already has a large number of volunteers. Red Cross drivers alone made 5000 trips in 2001, providing medical transportation to County residents. Many volunteers in programs organized by churches transport older citizens to a variety of destinations. The coordination of their efforts would ensure that needs are met.

Undoubtedly, other options exist. The key role for Chesterfield, however, should be to reexamine systematically its transportation needs to ensure that alternatives are available for all its citizens.

DRIVER SAFETY

he majority of adults in Chesterfield County own vehicles. Private automobiles are the primary, usually sole, means of transportation. Driving

STRATEGY 6:1 Evaluate the concept of the Chesterfield LINK van service in light of seniors' needs.

STRATEGY 6:2 Conduct market research to assess the need for taxi and car services.

STRATEGY 6:3
Help implement a
volunteer transportation
network to provide
assistance to seniors.

RECOMMENDATION 7
Chesterfield County
should provide
opportunities for seniors
to improve their driving
performances.

STRATEGY 7:1 Increase the number of safe-driving classes through the Senior Passport Program.

STRATEGY 7:2 Work with VDOT to upgrade road markings for maximum visibility.

STRATEGY 7:3 Enlarge street name signs and building numbers throughout the county. equates with freedom, and drivers want to drive safely as long as they are able. The continuous reduction of sensory, motor, and coordination abilities can limit normal activities, including the driver's ability to properly operate a vehicle. In the suburban/rural environment this can become the single greatest obstacle encountered by seniors living in their own homes. The Committee on the Future recommends that opportunities be provided for seniors to improve their driving performances.

Both the Chesterfield County Adult Education Program and the American Association of Retired Persons offer safe-driving classes for persons over 55 years of age. These courses target the special needs of older drivers, and completion of four two-hour classes can qualify a driver for reduced car-insurance premiums. The Chesterfield County Adult Education Program should continue to offer safe-driving classes through the Senior Passport Program, while aggressively marketing the program and preparing for increased demand.

Driving safety is enhanced by highly visible signs and directional aids. The clarity and presence of white-line markings along the edges of roads, of turn arrows at intersections and entries, and of lane division lines are essential safety factors for older drivers. Since Chesterfield's roads are built and maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the County's Transportation Department should continue to work with them to upgrade road markings for maximum visibility.

Street and building identification signs also need to improve. The Chesterfield County Environmental Engineering Department is systematically converting streetname signs from a 6-inch height with 4-inch lettering to a 9-inch height with 6½-inch lettering. The current reflection from these signs is visible at 30 feet to 40 feet, but higher-grade material could increase that distance tenfold. If higher-grade reflection is affordable, this change should be incorporated in the conversion. Similarly, better building identification is important for an older population as well as for its service providers. Many of our buildings do not have readable addresses posted. The County should enforce

ordinances¹⁰ requiring that street numbers be readable from the public right of way.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Providing safe places to walk will improve the quality of life of Chesterfield's seniors. As noted earlier, walking is good exercise for all age groups, and may be the best form of exercise for seniors. Perhaps equally important, walking is a social outlet for seniors. They often meet as a group for a daily stroll through a neighborhood or a nearby shopping area. Frequent social interaction is as important as exercise to long-term health. The Committee recommends that Chesterfield County require safe pedestrian access to retail, medical, public, and private facilities.

Chesterfield, therefore, should increase the amount of safe, walkable areas for its citizens. One urban planner has observed, "Walkable communities...lead to more social interaction, physical fitness, and diminished crime and other social problems. Walkable communities are more livable communities and lead to whole, happy, healthy lives for the people who live in them."

In short, Chesterfield's pedestrian paths and sidewalks enhance the life of all the citizens of the county, and especially its seniors.

Committee recommends The that County government continue its efforts to build sidewalks. Since 1997, the County's Planning Commission has insisted on public sidewalks in new construction. This policy should be continued and expanded to require walkways to connect existing residential and commercial areas with new ones. But the County cannot ignore existing neighborhoods. Many of our older communities have the highest concentration of seniors, but almost no sidewalks. The County has worked with VDOT to include sidewalks in the expansion of existing roads, such as Courthouse, Woolridge, and Robious roads. These efforts should continue as projects are identified. The County should study ways to finance and install sidewalks in established communities.

Ironically, one important aspect of walking areas is having places to stop and sit. Benches provide spots for seniors to rest and, thereby, to extend their exercise time. RECOMMENDATION 8
Chesterfield County
should require safe
pedestrian access to
retail, medical, public,
and private facilities.

Strategy 8:1 Increase the number of pedestrian pathways.

Strategy 8:2 Study ways to finance and install sidewalks in older areas of the County. Strategy 8:3
Improve lighting and visibility in both residential and commercial areas.

STRATEGY 8:4 Encourage physical safety standards for public and private buildings. Seating also enhances the social aspect of walking by giving strollers a chance to sit and talk during their outing. While the County has worked to construct sidewalks and pathways, it needs to incorporate benches as well.

Walkways need good visibility and lighting. Adequate lighting deters crime and makes orientation easier. Improved visibility in residential, commercial, and service areas makes it easier and safer to walk to nearby destinations. Indoor and outdoor lighting should not produce glare and blind spots. Control of vegetation would allow adequate light for safety on walkways.

Indoor walking presents hazards — slippery flooring, unmarked steps, and poor directional signs — which make it difficult. County office buildings have their share of these hazards. The County should make its indoor and outdoor walkways models for the community. It should articulate standards for high-quality pedestrian areas. Businesses, developments, and organizations that meet those standards should be recognized and honored.

¹ ----. "Fixing to Stay: A National Survey on Housing and Home Modification Issues." Washington: AARP, 2000. 6 November 2001http://research.aarp.org/il/home_mod_1.html

² ----. "Neighborhood Preservation—Strategies Now For Success In The Future." Chesterfield County, VA: Committee on the Future, 1995

³ Planning Department, Chesterfield County, Virginia. <u>The Plan of Chesterfield</u>, adopted 9 February 2000. 13 August 2002 http://www.co.chesterfield.va.us/Community Development/Planning/comp-plan.asp

⁴ A linear park is open space with significantly more perimeter or edge than traditional, consolidated parks. This edge may be used to buffer competing land uses, soften the urban image, and protect water quality and fragile natural ecosystems by providing a vegetated buffer for flood waters. Linear parks connect points of interest and activity centers, provide a corridor for wildlife, and accommodate popular recreational activities such as jogging, inline skating, walking, bicycling, and canoeing, which may be incompatible with traditional urban parks. (Greenways for America by Charles E. Little)

⁵ ----. "Caregiving Across the Life Cycle." National Family Caregivers Association/Fortis Long Term Care, 1998.

⁶ Various entities in our County provide senior centers, transportation services, "friendly visitors" or companions, telephone reassurance programs, home maintenance and repair services, home delivered meals, household help and personal care services, gatekeeper or home observation programs, in-home health care, personal emergency response, adult day care programs, respite care and hospice care.

⁷ Lund, Dale A. and Wright, Scott D. "Respite Services: Enhancing the Quality of Daily Life for Caregivers and Persons with Dementia." 28 March 2002. 15 August 2002

http://www.seniornavigator.com/content/community/respite3.asp#7

⁸ NACo Model County programs

⁹ Chesterfield County Department of Environmental Engineering

¹⁰ Chapter 16, Article II. Sec. 16-20.

¹¹ Dan Burden, Walkable Communities, Inc.









INVOLVEMENT

An active life is a critical indicator of physical, mental, and emotional health.

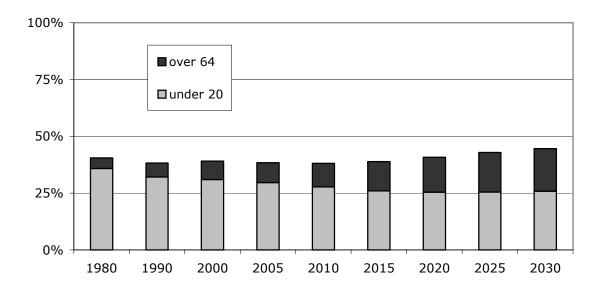
Most older Americans take part in at least one activity that connects them with people outside the home.

nvolvement in the community helps older people remain engaged with their neighbors, friends, and families. An active life is a critical indicator of physical, mental, and emotional health. Seniors want active lives. Most older Americans take part in at least one activity¹ that connects them with people outside the home. Because they have diverse interests and skills, many seniors want opportunities to work, serve, teach, and learn. They travel, join social or political groups, or contribute through volunteer service. Many combine these activities with full-or part-time paid employment, often in second or third careers. These kinds of activities are important not only for their primary purpose, but because they provide an opportunity for socializing.

This changing face of retirement will provide Chesterfield with new challenges and opportunities. For most of our country's history, people have worked at their jobs almost until they died. When Social Security was enacted, workers retiring at about age 65 often died a few years later. Two factors have changed that pattern. First, early retirement causes people to leave the work force during their productive years. Second, improved health care extends the useful lives of people well beyond traditional expectations. Simply phrased, the retirement years start earlier and run longer.

More has changed than the length of retirement. The baby-boomer generation is the largest single age group our nation has ever produced. The boomers are the best-educated and most productive generation in our history. They are also a demanding group whose members will not simply spend 30 years being idle. The unique character of the boomer generation is what presents the County — and the nation as a whole — with unprecedented opportunities and challenges.

FIGURE 9 PERCENTAGE OF THE COUNTY POPULATION AGED OVER AND UNDER THE TRADITIONAL WORKING YEARS



WORKFORCE DEPENDENCE. Traditionally the old and the young in a community have depended upon the work force. Projections show that those two age groups will become almost equal portions of the population in the next 30 years.

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU AND CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

erhaps the best way for the County to take advantage of seniors is to ensure that they remain in the work force. With many years of experience, seniors want to continue to serve productively in the workplace.² Many seniors, especially those forced into early retirement, need a new career to support themselves. The Committee recommends that Chesterfield County promote job opportunities for older adults.

Senior workers often prefer to "ramp down" their careers — to get out of the management or promotional track, to work a less demanding schedule, and to forego some of the benefits of full-time employment while they transition to retirement. The use of seniors in a reduced capacity provides tremendous benefits to businesses. They get experienced, motivated workers without having to pay all the fringe benefits given to other employees. Fledgling businesses particularly can take advantage of the skills of older workers to help them start their enterprises. The entire

RECOMMENDATION 9
Chesterfield County should promote job opportunities for older citizens.

STRATEGY 9:1 Find ways to tap the potential of senior workers who otherwise may leave the work force.

FIGURE 10 CHESTERFIELD COUNTY EMPLOYEE POPULATION BY AGE GOVERNMENT VS. PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

(FULL AND PERMANENT PART-TIME EMPLOYEES--AUGUST 2002)



THE AGING WORKFORCE. The average age of the Chesterfield County government employee is 42 years, and the average age of the Chesterfield County Public Schools employee is 45 years. The median age of the government and schools employees is 41 years and 45 years, respectively.

SOURCE: CHESTERFIELD COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT AND CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

<u>STRATEGY 9:2</u> Create a clearinghouse of senior adult resumes. community would benefit by finding ways to tap the potential of senior workers who otherwise may leave the work force.

Again, the problem is to match the need with the asset. The Committee recommends that the County, through its Senior Advocate, maintain a clearinghouse of resumes for retired workers as a ready source of talent for County employers.

In this particular area, the various branches of County government can go beyond simply matching needs with assets. County departments should continue to use County employees on a part-time basis after retirement. Further, the County should reach out to the senior community to find retirees whose skills from the private sector may benefit government.

Similarly, the Chesterfield County Public Schools can take advantage of the boomer generation. A large segment of current teachers are reaching retirement age. The

STRATEGY 9:3 Employ seniors as teachers or substitute teachers. school division should explore ways to use these employees in a continuing capacity. Their years of teaching experience would serve them well as mentors to beginning teachers. In addition, seniors with the required 60 hours of college credit should be encouraged to substitute teach in the schools.

Employers must recognize that older workers may need training and education. While seniors bring practical experience to the workplace, they may not have the technical skills required for new jobs. Typically, however, a minimal amount of orientation and training can bring them up to speed. The County should recognize employers who train and use older workers. The County should also encourage public schools, community colleges, and private training centers to focus on providing seniors with the skills they need to remain productive.

Finally, an essential factor in the promotion of employment opportunities for older citizens is advocacy at the state and federal levels to overcome obstacles that prevent seniors from remaining in the work force. The "Senior Citizen's Freedom to Work Act of 2000" is a good example of removing such a barrier.³

Strategy 9:4
Provide job-training opportunities.

STRATEGY 9:5
Support legislation that allows seniors to stay in the work force.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

any seniors prefer to remain involved in the community through volunteering. The same skills and enthusiasm that make seniors valuable employees also make them good volunteers. The Committee recommends the expansion and enrichment of volunteer opportunities for seniors.

The volunteer coordinator should establish and maintain a searchable database of volunteer skills and opportunities. The County's current Human Resource Management directory lists over 60 requests for volunteer help in 20 departments within Chesterfield County government. A study of County needs would likely identify more opportunities. The volunteer coordinator's database will make volunteering easier for seniors and provide the County with talented assistance.

The coordination of volunteers should extend beyond County government. In the community, volunteer opportunities exist in faith-based organizations, senior RECOMMENDATION 10
Chesterfield County
should expand and
enrich volunteer
opportunities for seniors.

STRATEGY 10:1
Expand the duties of the volunteer coordinator.

STRATEGY 10:2 Recognize senior volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION 11
Chesterfield County
should establish a
process to explore the
need for additional
community centers.

centers, hospitals, museums, youth organizations, civic groups, and recreational associations. Many entities seek volunteer assistance through senior organizations such as the American Association of Retired Persons, the Seniors in Community Service Program, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement, and the national group, Senior Corps. The County's volunteer database should include information about these opportunities, and should provide links to Web sites relevant to volunteering.

Finally, the County should continue to applaud its volunteers. In 2001, over 5,000 people in Chesterfield County, including seniors, volunteered time to the community. The County hosts an annual Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast. In addition, volunteer hours given by seniors are acknowledged through the Chesterfield County Senior Volunteer Hall of Fame. Although most people do not volunteer for fame and glory, this type of recognition rewards their efforts and encourages them to continue.

COMMUNITY CENTERS

ommunity centers serve seniors' needs in all major areas explored in this report — housing, mobility, health, education, social and leisure, financial, and information services. The Committee recommends that the County establish a process to explore the need for additional community centers.

Chesterfield currently has four types of community centers serving seniors. Chesterfield's community centers in Bensley and Ettrick are publicly owned and operated centers. The County's Parks and Recreation Department staffs these facilities. They schedule a wide variety of programs, workshops and classes open to all area residents—youths, teens, adults, and seniors. These facilities ensure the health and safety of participants and provide a pleasant environment. The buildings include a kitchen, activity rooms, a multipurpose room, and a conference room. The grounds have courts or fields for a variety of sports. These centers exist because of the cooperative efforts of Chesterfield County (using Community Development Block

Grant funding), area civic associations, area athletic associations, and the Area Agency on Aging.

Another model for community centers is the private club or association. Larger neighborhoods, such as Brandermill and Salisbury, often have year-round paid staff for program development, operation, and maintenance. In contrast, smaller neighborhood associations may rely entirely on volunteer services provided by their memberships. Although these clubs typically focus on family activities, they do include senior programs in their schedules.

A third model is a privately operated nonprofit center exclusively for seniors. Two such centers have opened recently in Chesterfield County. The Shepherd's Center of Chesterfield operates in the Chester Baptist Church. The Senior Center of Richmond at Chesterfield maintains a permanent facility on Huguenot Road. Both centers are funded through small annual memberships, plus public and private donations. Boards of Directors and paid staff plan programs and services.

Another important model is a senior program found in organizations dedicated to broad community use, such as the YMCA, churches, or hospitals. Fees and private donations fund these programs. All these models serve a common purpose — to keep seniors active and involved in the community.

While Chesterfield has a number of outlets for senior activity, not all areas of the County are served. Once the need is identified, the Senior Advocate should bring together private interests and community groups that can establish and operate a center. Community Development Block Grant funds should be used where feasible. When locations are hard to find, the County should assist in a search for buildings and help to obtain zoning and other approvals.

INTERGENERATIONAL CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION

In a sense, the Committee's recommendations about employment, volunteers, and community centers all touch on a key concept: intergenerational communication. In a community where all people are of value, the experience and perspective of seniors can complement the energy and new ideas of a younger

Strategy 11:1 Encourage placement in high-need areas of the county.

Strategy 11:2 Work with private and nonprofit organizations.

STRATEGY 11:3
Use Community
Development Block Grant
funds where feasible.

RECOMMENDATION 12 Chesterfield County should assist in the expansion of intergenerational contact and communication. STRATEGY 12:1

Foster and coordinate activities through which seniors can share their knowledge, experience and insight with others in the community.

STRATEGY 12:2

Support volunteer efforts of families, friends, neighbors, and law enforcement to monitor the well-being of seniors.

generation. More importantly, contact among generations contributes to harmony and mutual respect in a community. The Committee recommends that the County assist in the expansion of intergenerational contact and communication.

Programs that match older and younger citizens deserve special attention. The County should foster programs in which seniors mentor younger people. It should also recognize the importance of situations in which young people can offer their talents and skills to older people. Much interaction will automatically occur in the workplace, in community centers, and in volunteer activities.

Students and young entrepreneurs gain insight to the real world with practical applications explained by senior businessmen. Almost forgotten arts can be passed to a new generation of eager young minds. The athletes of yesterday coach and encourage the youths in the community.

Young people are equipped with generous strength and vitality, which many older people no longer have in large supply. It is very important to foster and coordinate volunteer efforts by family, friends, neighbors, and law enforcement to monitor the safety and well-being of seniors. Community service projects in middle and high schools may involve assisted-living facilities and nursing homes, or provide routine maintenance at homes of elder neighbors. A number of localities have been very successful combining adult day-care programs with child day-care programs. Many churches have friendly-visitor programs in which concerted efforts are made to check on elderly people and to keep them involved in the faith community. Similarly, through TRIAD, law enforcement officers befriend and monitor older people. Outreach of this nature provides a different type of involvement for seniors — but one that is just as important to their well-being.

¹ Maintaining America's Social Fabric: The AARP Survey of Civic Involvement, 1997

² AARP Segmentation Analysis: Baby Boomers Envision Their Retirement. Roper Starch Worldwide, Inc. February 1999.

³ A Brief History of Social Security, Social Security Administration. August 2000: No. 21-059.







QUALIFIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

RECOMMENDATION 13
Chesterfield County
should encourage
training in health
professions that provide
services to seniors.

STRATEGY 13:1 Expand health-care course offerings and job-training at the high schools, Tech Center, and community colleges.

STRATEGY 13:2
Encourage guidance
counselors and science
teachers to recommend
careers in the field of
health care for seniors.

eniors will seek the assistance of qualified health professionals to monitor their wellness and provide care for injury or disease. Nearly all health-care fields and specialties may be involved in the care of older adults. Unfortunately, Chesterfield has a shortfall in trained practitioners to attend to the special needs of the elderly. The Richmond metropolitan area offers some resources for the health-care community to acquire the skills needed for senior patients. Our region, however, needs more training programs in elder care. Unfortunately, even the existing opportunities are underutilized. The County should encourage professionals to take advantage of the existing offerings.

For instance, Virginia Commonwealth University and the Medical College of Virginia have the Virginia Center on Aging, the Virginia Geriatric Education Center, and a Department of Gerontology. All of these facilities offer training for senior care. The County should encourage its doctors and other health-care professionals to obtain this training. Simple measures, such as a breakfast and free lecture at the health department or Lucy Corr Village nursing home, could attract professionals to broaden their knowledge.

The County also has a shortage of other licensed professionals, such as nurses and aides, but, again, our region provides opportunities for training in these careers. Community colleges offer an associate degree in nursing, and certificate/degree programs in health-technology fields. MCV's School of Nursing offers diploma programs for Registered Nurse licensure. The Chesterfield County Public School Tech Center offers a certificate in licensed practical nursing. The Greater Richmond Area Health Education Center (AHEC) promotes careers in health care with programs in the area school systems.

The Chesterfield County Public Schools can play an additional role in filling the county's need for health-care professionals. Guidance counselors and science teachers should encourage and recommend future study in the field of health care for seniors. They should emphasize that health

care provides a career track with advancement. For instance, students may start as aides, move along as LPNs and RNs, and eventually become nurse practitioners. Community colleges should emphasize the same career-ladder programs.

In light of current shortages and the growing senior population, Chesterfield's need for health-care professionals will only grow in the next 20 years. Course offerings and job-training opportunities should be expanded at county high schools, the Chesterfield Tech Center, and at community colleges. The County should encourage schools and private businesses to partner to fund training in health-care fields.

CONCLUSION

hesterfield County has important tasks ahead. The growth of the senior population has already begun, and it will accelerate through the first three decades of this century. As a group, seniors will need a variety of services. More importantly, they will insist on continuing to contribute to society as they have throughout their lives. To address these needs and harness these resources the County will require the efforts of government, charitable groups, churches, businesses, and private individuals. The focus of their efforts should be on the contributions seniors can offer to the county, using their talents for the good of all.

If we begin now Chesterfield County can advantage of the opportunities offered by seniors, "our only increasing natural resource."

RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION 1

Chesterfield County should establish a leadership position within County government to promote senior services.

STRATEGY 1:1	Plan a regularly scheduled roundtable for people working with seniors.
STRATEGY 1:2	Create a one-stop shop for information about issues important to
	seniors, their families, and their caregivers.
STRATEGY 1:3	Provide information about resources through the Internet and future
	technologies.
STRATEGY 1:4	Connect our seniors with public agencies and private clearinghouses to
	protect them from fraud and abuse.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Chesterfield County should continue to make lifelong learning a priority.

STRATEGY 2:1	Expand educational and recreational opportunities for seniors.
STRATEGY 2:2	Ensure the availability of classes about health and financial issues.
STRATEGY 2:3	Offer preventive measures against fraud.

RECOMMENDATION 3

We — the citizens and County government — should assist older people to live independently in their homes in the communities of their choice.

Increase awareness of support programs that assist people who choose
to "age in place."
Revisit, revise, and promote incentive programs regarding housing for
seniors.
Explore new zoning ordinances regulating innovative options.
Study housing for seniors to advise developers and homeowners of best
practices.
Continue and encourage the development of villages.
Ensure the availability of a full range of housing options for seniors.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Chesterfield County should encourage programs that assist residents with maintaining their own wellness.

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STRATEGY 4:1	Continue HealthTrak and Employee Assistance Programs for County
	employees.
STRATEGY 4:2	Offer assistance to, and encourage, other employers to offer wellness
	programs.
STRATEGY 4:3	Offer assistance to, and encourage, communities to offer wellness
	programs.
STRATEGY 4:4	Provide for pedestrian pathways to encourage wellness.
STRATEGY 4:5	Coordinate meal services so County seniors enjoy good nutrition.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Chesterfield County should foster caregiver assistance.

- <u>STRATEGY 5:1</u> Organize and coordinate respite providers to relieve caregivers.
- STRATEGY 5:2 Amend County ordinances to make adult day care readily available.
- <u>STRATEGY 5:3</u> Provide training in direct care and personal advocacy for family caregivers.
- <u>STRATEGY 5:4</u> Provide specialized assistance to elderly caregivers.
- STRATEGY 5:5 Encourage employers to develop family-friendly initiatives that allow workers to assist older relatives

RECOMMENDATION 6

Chesterfield County should explore transportation alternatives useful to seniors.

- <u>STRATEGY 6:1</u> Evaluate the concept of the Chesterfield LINK van service in light of seniors' needs.
- <u>STRATEGY 6:2</u> Conduct market research to assess need for taxi and car services.
- <u>STRATEGY 6:3</u> Help implement a volunteer transportation network to provide assistance to seniors.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Chesterfield County should provide opportunities for seniors to improve their driving performance.

- STRATEGY 7:1 Increase the number of safe-driving classes through the Senior Passport Program.
- STRATEGY 7:2 Work with VDOT to upgrade road markings for maximum visibility.
- STRATEGY 7:3 Enlarge street name signs and building numbers throughout the County.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Chesterfield County should require safe pedestrian access to retail, medical, public, and private facilities.

- STRATEGY 8:1 Increase the number of pedestrian pathways.
- STRATEGY 8:2 Study ways to finance and install sidewalks in older areas of the county.
- STRATEGY 8:3 Improve lighting and visibility in both residential and commercial areas.
- <u>STRATEGY 8:4</u> Recognize and honor public and private buildings that meet physical safety standards.

RECOMMENDATION 9

Chesterfield County should promote job opportunities for older citizens.

- <u>STRATEGY 9:1</u> Find ways to tap the potential of senior workers who otherwise may leave the work force.
- <u>STRATEGY 9:2</u> Create a clearinghouse of senior adult resumes.
- STRATEGY 9:3 Employ seniors as teachers or substitute teachers.
- STRATEGY 9:4 Provide job-training opportunities.
- STRATEGY 9:5 Support legislation that allows seniors to stay in the work force.

RECOMMENDATION 10

Chesterfield County should expand and enrich volunteer opportunities for seniors.

STRATEGY 10:1 Expand the duties of the volunteer coordinator.

STRATEGY 10:2 Recognize senior volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Chesterfield County should establish a process to explore the need for additional community centers.

STRATEGY 11:1 Encourage placement in high-need areas of the County.

STRATEGY 11:2 Work with private and nonprofit organizations.

STRATEGY 11:3 Use Community Development Block Grant funds where feasible.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Chesterfield County should assist in the expansion of intergenerational contact and communication.

STRATEGY 12:1 Foster and coordinate activities through which seniors can share their knowledge, experience, and insight with others in the community.

STRATEGY 12:2 Support volunteer efforts of families, friends, neighbors, and law

enforcement to monitor the well-being of seniors.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Chesterfield County should encourage training in health professions that provide services to seniors.

<u>STRATEGY 13:1</u> Expand health-care course offerings and job-training at high schools, the Tech Center, and community colleges.

<u>STRATEGY 13:2</u> Encourage guidance counselors and science teachers to recommend careers in fields of health care for seniors.

APPENDIX: Relevance to Prior Reports of Committee on the Future

rior to this study, other Committee on the Future reports supported the need to recommend actions addressing the needs of the County's aging population.

An informed, involved, and independent senior population is interrelated with quality adult education, necessary human services, and effective land-use planning. The 1993 Committee on the Future report, Economic Development "Strategies For Success," focused on strengthening the County's work force through training and education, implementing programs to insure continued independence for senior adults, and using comprehensive planning for improved growth and development.

Community involvement, the influence of area schools, the need for residents to feel safe in their neighborhoods, and the preservation, rehabilitation, and design of our neighborhoods are the bonds that join all age groups in a high-quality society. The value of seniors was recognized in the 1995 Committee on the Future report, Neighborhood Preservation "Strategies Now For Success In The Future," which highlighted the urgency to address the needs of aging neighborhoods and improve the quality of our neighborhoods.

The 1999 Committee on the Future report, <u>Youth Development "Today's Youth—Tomorrow's Leaders,"</u> urged the community as a whole to recognize that young people are a priority, that they can be an important resource for the community, and that our collective obligation is to work for the fullest development of our young people. Building on the recommendations of previous reports, this study urges the community as a whole to become aware of the senior population, to rely on seniors for help and guidance, and to collectively support seniors.

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